

Abstract

An in vitro for testing the immunomodulatory especially anti-inflammatory or pro-inflammatory effect of a test material comprises placing a microporous support having a monolayer of epithelial cells therein in contact with a nutrient medium in a culture well. Cells of the immune system such as peripheral blood mononuclear cells are introduced into the medium and a test material is also introduced into the nutrient medium. A change in an immunological marker, especially a cytokine, particularly TNF&agr; or IL-8 in response to the test material is determined. The test material may be a strain of Lactobacillus or Bifidobacterium or other material which may be a probiotic.